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Manitowoc School District

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Manitowoc, a city of about 33,000, is located on the shores of Lake Michigan south of the Door County peninsula. It is one of Wisconsin's older cities, having served as a port of entry for travelers, traders, and pioneers during the early 19th century. The rugged beaches and blue horizons of Lake Michigan figure prominently in its landscape, with local residents and an increasing number of tourists enjoying this scenic beauty.

The city was once primarily dependent on a few large industries; however, its economy is currently supported by over 100 small-to-medium-sized manufacturers whose products range from ice machines and soap to advanced biotechnical research. Along with manufacturing, recreation and tourism play an increasing role in the city's economy. A marina, lakeside recreation area, and nationally recognized maritime museum enhance tourism. Furthermore, Manitowoc is the sole Wisconsin port of entry for travelers using the car ferry to Ludington, Michigan, which can bring up to 2,000 visitors a day.

About 40% of the households in Manitowoc County have an income of \$35,000 or more, with the average household income estimated to be about \$36,000. About 97% of county residents are white, including many of German and Polish descent. The school-age population of 5,768 is 87% white, 10% Asian American, 0.7% African American, and 0.2% Hispanic. The large number of area private schools (Catholic and Lutheran high

schools, a Catholic middle school, and nine Christian elementary schools) is evidence of a strong religious influence in the community.

Students in the Manitowoc Public School District (MPSD) are housed in 10 school buildings, including one Kindergarten/Early Childhood Center, six elementary schools (grades 1-6), two junior high schools, and one high school. The district employs 406 instructional staff.

The Manitowoc Public School District (MPSD) has recently undertaken an extensive and comprehensive self-study of its health education program and how it meets the needs of students, staff, and community. As part of this process, the district used the Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life-Attitudes and Behaviors Survey in 1996. The survey and other forms of data collection resulted in a detailed five-year district program plan that has the healthy development of youth as its top priority. District staff members are excited about the new direction and vision as they complete the early phases of the plan.

Implementation Strategies

Department of Public Instruction Leadership

During the summer of 1994, a team from MPSD was selected to attend a three-day training session sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction, "Integrating Youth Development Strategies: A Summer Institute for School and Community Leaders." A total of 17 local district teams, CESA staff, and representatives from various state agencies participated in the institute, which had the long-term goal of helping school districts begin to take a more comprehensive and

integrated approach to addressing health and prevention issues. Specific objectives for the sessions included:

- gaining greater understanding of the Framework;
- experiencing a team building process;
- developing a team vision for youth of their communities, including skills and competence needed as young people enter adulthood;
- developing a locally relevant framework that organizes and links strategies and approaches for helping youth develop the desired skills and competencies;
- developing an action plan for establishing the local framework; and
- gaining the skills necessary for replicating the action planning process, as needed, in the local district.

The six-member team from Manitowoc, led by AODA Coordinator Kathy Lemberger (also an assistant principal at one of the middle schools), included classroom teachers, a guidance counselor, and a community member. Upon their return to the district, they played a leadership role in generating further school and community interest and establishing a process for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to school health programs designed to increase youth resiliency and assets. Staff regard the current districtwide focus on youth development and comprehensive school health programs as its greatest accomplishment over the last few years. This overall shift in thinking, rather than strategies adopted in any single component of the Framework, is where the district has made its greatest gains.

Funding Support

Since the summer institute, the district has systematically used the Framework to develop its school health program through federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act entitlements and competitive state grants. For example, in 1996, MPSD received a two-year State AOD Program Grant to

- develop and implement peer mediation programs at the elementary and junior high school levels;
- conduct conflict resolution/anger management training for fifth through twelfth graders;
- continue implementing the "Peace-making Skills for Little Kids" curriculum;

- train bus drivers and instructional aides in the negotiation process;
- conduct a Parenting Fair and develop parent resource centers in the elementary schools;
- provide opportunities for high school students, parents, staff, and administrators to evaluate the effect of class schedules, class size, policies, and procedures on building assets, fostering resiliency, and establishing a healthy school environment;
- support a community forum for broad-based collaborative healthy community efforts; and
- resurvey all eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders using the Search Institute's, "Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behavior Survey."

In 1997, the MPSD received a DPI competitive After School/Summer School grant to establish a tutoring program at two buildings identified as most in need. The program, which involves matching tutors from the community with identified "at promise" students (a deliberate change from an "at-risk" label), is designed to assist students in developing their basic skills and making a successful transition from elementary to junior high and junior high to senior high.

Needs Assessment:

District staff felt it was important that parents, teachers, students, and the community begin to participate in the assessment of health needs and strengths within the community. Simultaneously, the wider community, including nonprofit and for-profit agencies, also seemed ready to look to a prevention framework in meeting the needs of youth and families (see Family and Communications section). The district Health Program Improvement Committee gathered data from the following sources:

- The Search Institute "Profiles of Student Life - Attitudes and Behaviors Survey",
- MPSD Rate Your Child's School Survey,
- Health Integration Survey, and
- focus groups.

Focus groups were held with teachers, students, parents, and community members. Both focus group questions and the analysis of data were organized into five areas that closely reflect the Wisconsin Framework for CSHP: curriculum and instruction, healthy school environment, adult programs, pupil services, and family and community. Subcommittees then identified strengths and

weaknesses from a particular data source in each of these areas. This data analysis resulted in recommendations for future directions and a program development plan.

Healthy School Environment

The Manitowoc Public School District's efforts to foster a healthy school environment are guided by research on resiliency and assets. Using a continuum that moves from risk (focusing on student deficits and risk factors) toward resiliency (focusing on student assets and strengths), staff has reflected on

- relationships between and among teachers, students, and parents;
- teacher behavior and attitudes;
- physical environment;
- curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- grouping; and
- motivation and responsibility.

In addition, staff examined local data from the Search Institute survey and 30 developmental assets; they were then asked to identify which of the assets they could foster as a member of the school community. Following this identification, staff developed action plans around the specific assets.

Finally, questions that address the healthy school environment component of the Framework were included in focus groups of students, staff, parents, and community members. Focus group members' responses helped guide future program plans.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The Manitowoc Public School District has worked hard to apply the vision identified by staff in developing its health and prevention curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The mission of the health education department is to offer challenges to students of all ability levels and diverse learning styles through a variety of sequential learning opportunities designed to help students

- recognize that total health includes all of a person's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth, development, and well-being; and
- develop knowledge that individuals can prevent most health problems through positive health behaviors.

The district infuses a variety of prevention information into the curriculum in a developmentally appropriate manner. The district curriculum guide covers 10 content areas in health and safety: accident prevention and safety, consumer health, community health, environmental, family life education, personal health, substance use and abuse, prevention and control of disease, and mental and emotional health. The district is in the process of reviewing this curriculum guide based on the seven National Health Standards.

School assemblies, sometimes taught by the district social worker, focus on building assets and social skills. Peer Educators (see Student Programs) and Wellness Day provide additional opportunities for students to learn about a variety of health topics (see Family and Community Connections).

Student Learning Cycle

The Student Learning Cycle (SLC) is a curriculum, instruction, and assessment tool that was developed by all district staff. Because so many were involved in its development, it is a tool in which they have shared ownership. The district adopted the SLC in April 1996 as the basis for staff development, supervision, and evaluation. This flexible tool builds assessment into the cycle of learning, from presentation of information to students to their mastery and understanding of the concepts. The SLC, however, assesses more than student learning; it also assesses the instructor's success in imparting the material to the student. In its recognition of the connection between educator and student, the SLC also provides a continuous improvement tool for instructors.

PreK-5: Elementary classroom teachers, the counselor, and the school nurse deliver the preK-5 health curriculum, which is modeled after "Skills for Growing." This curriculum, developed by Lion's Quest, focuses on health and decision-making skills. Teachers and counselors give individual attention to students to strengthen student assets and build resiliency while providing information regarding health and prevention through classroom activities that enhance self-esteem and build resiliency skills. This comprehensive program for grades K-5 brings together parents, educators, and members of the community to teach children important life and citizenship skills within a caring and consistent environment. The program teaches skills in four main areas that embrace different aspects of the child's world: self-discipline, responsibility good judgment, and getting along with others.

A basic aim of the program is to develop a support system for children that encourages the home, school, and community to work together. The program recognizes that children learn social skills in a variety of ways and in many different settings. It also acknowledges the fundamental importance of parent and family involvement. It incorporates a clear set of values that the Manitowoc Public School District supports as important for the healthy growth of children. Although these values are not always mentioned explicitly within each lesson, they provide a basic moral and ethical framework for the entire program. They include:

- Self-discipline: appreciating and respecting oneself, one's talents, and one's potential; persevering to achieve goals; postponing immediate gratification, when appropriate
- Commitment to a drug-free lifestyle: learning factual information in order to know the dangers involved in drug use; developing specific resistance skills to say "no" to alcohol and other drugs
- Respect for others: respecting their feelings, their beliefs, their privacy, and their individuality
- Compassion: expressing caring and concern for others
- Good judgment: seeking wise counsel, considering alternatives and consequences, and making informed decisions
- Responsibility: making and keeping commitments to oneself and others; having the courage to act with integrity
- Honesty: pursuing open, honest, clear communication and a commitment to be true to oneself and others
- Family cohesion: being committed to fostering a healthy and supportive family unit
- Trustworthiness: being reliable and keeping commitments
- Involvement: participating in one's family, in social groups, and in the community in positive ways

In addition, a "Peacemaking Skills for Little Kids" curriculum is used, and peace tables have been established in elementary classrooms.

Grade 6: Classroom teachers, counselors, and the school nurse are involved in curriculum delivery at the sixth grade. The Positive Action program builds on the skills and information provided through the "Skills for Growing" curriculum, promoting decision-making skills and healthy choices. Positive Action teaches concepts that are basic to

social and academic effectiveness and competence: personal worth, good health, self-management, courteous behavior, honesty, and self-improvement. In addition, the DARE Program, conducted by local law enforcement officers, assists sixth graders in their transition to junior high school and helps prepare them to resist potential temptations as they move into larger groups of students.

Grades 7-9: Prevention information and activities are fully integrated into the curriculum for seventh, eighth, and ninth graders through science, social studies, communication arts, and physical education. A written curriculum guide clearly identifies the performance objectives for each of the content areas. A three-week integrated unit for all students addresses the topic of alcohol and traffic safety, while an elective health class as well as family and consumer education classes cover content in alcohol and other drugs and other prevention information. Finally, all students in these grades participate in a Wellness Day. In general, along with nutrition and pregnancy prevention, the following broad topics are addressed at these grade levels:

- identifying and affirming positive self-esteem
- understanding the role of values in decision making
- understanding the physical and emotional changes that go along with puberty
- understanding that there are a number of possible choices involved in a situation, and identifying the possible consequences of their choices
- developing dating guidelines contributing to fun and safe dating
- recognizing sexual pressure and ways to say no
- understanding both positive and abusive types of touch and
- gaining an awareness of the health risks involved with drug use and abuse.

Grades 9-12: A tenth-grade health class is required for all students who have not fulfilled the health graduation requirement. Students also receive an integrated health unit in communication arts, science, family and consumer education, physical education, and social studies.

Pupil Services

The district employs three school psychologists, three social workers, and 11 guidance counselors. Guidance and other pupil service personnel meet

monthly to share information regarding students, review student progress toward social and academic success, and discuss trends in student behavior or community concerns. Overall, members of the Pupil Services Team provide for individual counseling, classroom presentations, small group counseling, support group facilitation, schoolwide drug awareness programming, and parental support.

Each school building has a Building Consultation Team (BCT) that meets weekly. School staff as well as other concerned adults can refer students to a BCT, which consists of the principal, school nurse, psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker, EEN specialists, police liaison officer and appropriate representation from parents and community social service and health agencies and organizations. Although BCT members may vary from school to school, each team includes members appropriate to the school and community they serve. Overall, BCTs focus on student success and achievement, concentrating on the skills necessary for social and academic competency. They provide individual attention to student needs and develop prevention and intervention strategies for students who are referred, always viewing students within the context of family and community.

The Manitowoc Public School District is also aware of and concerned about the potential for alcohol or other drug use in the community. Consequently, BCTs are an additional support to students for ATOD prevention. Team members have received training from the Midwest Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities in an effort to expand their knowledge and skills in ATOD prevention efforts. BCT members from each school also attend districtwide quarterly meetings to facilitate communication among the buildings, identify current challenges and resources they may share, and provide an additional opportunity for training. Combined with the Student Learning Cycle implemented in the classrooms, BCTs form an integral part of the Manitowoc Public School District's focus on youth.

Student Programs

Conflict Resolution/Anger Management

This program reached 352 fifth-grade students in the 1997-98 school year, helping them to learn healthy behaviors for successfully coping with conflict. Through activities, students learn to identify and express feelings and needs and identify and resolve social problems peacefully. Training

includes specific conflicts that arise in the school setting such as rumors, harassment, threatening behavior or verbal assaults, and taking things without permission.

In addition, an all-day session addressing conflict resolution and anger management is held for all fifth graders in the fall and again in January. Students listen to a speaker and then discuss issues that are raised. Values and problem solving strategies discussed during the sessions are reiterated and further strengthened through the Lion's Quest curriculum.

Teen Assets Group

The team of MPSD educators attending the 1995 Midwest Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Communities training started the Teen Assets Group (TAG) at Washington Junior High School the following year. Student participants for this group were chosen through teacher recommendations. TAG groups, which consist of 6 - 8 students, meet once a week for six weeks to work on group activities that help build assets. Four TAG groups meet each quarter.

Support Groups

Support groups, which provide youth with a community of caring peers, were started three years ago as a result of a Peace Education seminar on social skills for students. Ratings are used to monitor improvement in group members' behavior. This rating system encourages continuous improvement among students, allows students to assess their own progress, and appraises the integration of student knowledge and behavior.

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch is the name for groups of students at Monroe Elementary, Wilson Junior High, and Lincoln High School who have committed themselves to being alcohol and drug free. The focus is simple: drugs and alcohol are not needed to have a good time. To help foster a sense of pride and commitment to the group, the student is responsible for obtaining recommendations from three different teachers and a parent permission slip before being accepted to the program.

The group meets weekly during the students' lunch period to participate, with staff advisors, in discussions and fun activities including planning other out-of-school events (for example, bowling parties, school forest trips, and trips to sporting events). In addition, Lunch Bunch acknowledges

students who demonstrate the attributes of responsible community members.

The program has grown exponentially since it began in 1994 with 14 members in one school. Three staff and 45 students participated actively in the program during the second year; by the third year, six staff members and 107 students at three schools were participating in Lunch Bunch groups.

The Lunch Bunch is one way the Manitowoc Public School District has encouraged positive and healthy behaviors for students. Just as important, the program has shown young people who make positive choices that adults do care about them. This program gives recognition to youth who are making good decisions regarding their health and well being but might otherwise be overlooked. Lunch Bunch is also a way to demonstrate to others that drugs or alcohol are not needed to have fun. This program allows young people to take a stand against drugs and alcohol and to be proud of themselves and their beliefs.

Peer Educators-Teen AIDS Task Force

Collaboration between the Manitowoc Public School District and Manitowoc County Health Department resulted in the development of the Peer Educators-Teen AIDS Task Force during the 1993-94 school year. This program currently includes about 40 middle and high school students who participate in a full-day training in cooperation with the American Red Cross and the Manitowoc County nursing program. Following training, they offer education and social support to their peers within the schools and community.

Peer Educators provide accurate HIV/AIDS information and act as a resource to their peers in individual or group settings by participating in a variety of leadership and teaching activities, including:

- writing newspaper articles;
- performing in role plays and skits;
- acting as guest speakers; and
- doing classroom presentations.

Adult Programs

Parent Programs

Books for Babies: This MPSD program helps parents prepare their children for academic and social success by providing information about child development to parents of newborns through four year olds. A newsletter offers ideas for fun activi-

ties, parenting advice, and information on how to help a child gain school-readiness skills.

Preschool Program: During weekly sessions, parents of preschool children have an opportunity to work with their children on positive educational experiences and to discuss their questions and concerns while their children are enjoying other activities.

Parenting Fair/Parent Resource Center: A Parenting Fair with the theme of "Building Assets in Kids" offered a keynote speaker, a family meal, four small-group sessions, and materials to families of K-6 students. Parents were also introduced to the Parent Resource Center and the availability of a backpack containing a family homework assignment and parent resources to be taken home by each child once a month. At the completion of the fair, each parent developed one asset building goal for her/his child.

Parent Pipeline: The Parent Pipeline, which has existed for about seven years, meets monthly to focus on issues of concern to parents of junior high students. The group is parent-facilitated, and attendance averages between 16-25. Pipeline topics have included implementing a school hot lunch program, staffing, dances, and community concerns. This group also participated in the Search Institute community assessment and continues to discuss findings regarding asset building.

Teen Sexuality Parent Nights: Three two-hour sessions are offered throughout the year in which parents of seventh and eighth graders have an opportunity to review the curriculum and discuss their concerns and questions about addressing the topic of sexuality with their children.

Active Parenting Classes: These classes are offered to interested parents of elementary as well as secondary students.

Staff Development

Wellness Screening: Staff members and relatives have the opportunity to participate in a wellness screening at which they receive a 19-page report on their fitness. A personal interview is conducted with each participating staff member to establish wellness goals.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): The district provides an EAP to address health and wellness concerns of staff members and their families.

Resiliency Training: District instructional staff have received training on resiliency and have spent time discussing such resiliency-building factors as care and support, high expectations, and participation. They have worked to match the resiliency/asset paradigm to teaching and learning.

Problem-Solving Skills for Bus Drivers: Using funds from a State AOD Program Grant, district bus drivers have been trained in communication, problem solving, and negotiation skills to help them constructively address situations that may arise on buses.

Family and Community Connections

The Prevention Consortium and Asset-Building Community Program

The Prevention Consortium began in Spring 1994, when leaders of the Lakeshore Community Assistance Program called a meeting of nonprofit and for-profit agencies and organizations to discuss the importance of prevention in addressing youth and family issues. This group expressed support for one mutually acceptable statement: "After many years and many thousands of dollars, intervention programs (even very early intervention programs) simply were not affecting the kind of change in our young people, our families, and our community that we are working to attain. We need a new model, and that model is prevention."

The Prevention Consortium was formed from that earlier group and grew to about 50 people who represented most of the organizations and agencies in the county offering services to young people and families. The consortium put together a workshop, "Ounce of Prevention," attended by nearly 200 local staff and volunteers in Fall 1995.

Meanwhile, the Manitowoc Public School District had administered the Search Institute survey earlier in 1995 and shared its results with the Prevention Consortium. As consortium members learned more about the Search Institute's approach and research, they became increasingly convinced that the "positive youth development" (resiliency, asset building) approach would be useful in their efforts to make a difference in youth and families.

At about this time, the Manitowoc County Department of Human Services began to call together other key community leaders who were not repre-

sented on the Prevention Consortium. This group included leaders in business, government, and clergy along with service providers. The Key Leaders began with the same mission as the Prevention Consortium; that is, the community as a whole needs to get involved in the business of raising our young people to become productive citizens and needs to support families in their efforts to raise children to adulthood. The group is now called ABC Asset Building Community and has hired a full-time coordinator.

Focus Groups

In 1996 the AODA coordinator facilitated a focus group to gather data for the Health Program Improvement Committee. The group included a fire fighter, an attorney, a dentist, a doctor, some of the area clergy, a provider from a treatment center, and an ATOD counselor from a medical center. These community persons made suggestions for further incorporating health into the school curriculum and ways to work together to identify community assets.

Parents, business and community leaders as well as other interested community members, educators, and students later took part in Search Institute focus groups that were part of the effort to identify school and community assets.

Together...We Grow

Together...We Grow program goals are to encourage parents to become involved in their child's education, promote family efforts to spend quality time together, and support parents in their challenging job of raising children. The Together...We Grow program includes a family resource center located in the library of each elementary school. Each center contains books and media material as well as other helpful information which is made available to all families in the school. A packet that includes a list of materials is periodically sent home with students, who may then take materials home in a specially provided bag.

The program also includes a family support group component that is just beginning to be implemented. Its main focus is facilitating parents in providing support and leadership to one another. Parents and other adult caregivers gather once a month to discuss the challenges of raising elementary school children; guest resource people are invited to the meeting to offer suggestions. Participants also discuss school and community

policies and programs that affect their children; they have set goals for future actions that include:

- bringing families, schools, and the Manitowoc community together;
- developing a committee including parents, students, and community members to evaluate and make recommendations for a lunch program that offers nutritious choices;
- addressing physical and emotional risk factors among students, especially targeting abuse; and
- providing employee assistance and wellness programs.

Wellness Day

Wellness Day, which is attended by students in grades 7-9, has been successful for the last six years in helping youth explore health and wellness issues with community members. The event familiarizes students with a variety of community agencies in an informal setting, and students seem to regard information as more credible because it comes from community “experts” rather than classroom teachers.

Each Wellness day students may choose four workshops from among nearly 40 that are offered. Workshop topics have included:

- AIDS/HIV
- Dating Violence
- How Outdoor Skills Contribute To A Healthier Lifestyle
- Depression and Suicide
- How the Karate Kid Became Famous: Understanding the Art of Meditation
- No Brains - No Wellness
- Marijuana: Myth & Reality or “If I Smoke Marijuana What Will Happen To Me?”
- Teen Stress in the 90s

The mentoring program, which began in 1996, continues to grow, with 26 mentors from the community currently volunteering at a school once a week for one hour. The mentor provides academic help to an assigned student and is also a caring person who is considered a friend. The powerful message for students is that someone is concerned about them.

Finally, the Manitowoc Fire Department and Washington Junior High School have developed a program, called Start, for “at promise” (rather than “at-risk”) junior high students. Students work with the fire fighters to learn teamwork and leadership skills.

Future Directions

The Manitowoc Public School District has successfully engaged the community in developing a vision of youth development and comprehensive school health education. The district expects to build on this success through continuing cooperation, coordination, and communication with the Manitowoc community. The district has supportive partners in the Manitowoc County Department of Human Services, the Asset Building Community Program, the Prevention Consortium, and the ABC Asset-Building Community groups. Together, they will continue to build on past efforts in positive youth development and to explore further opportunities for networking and collaboration. Finally, the district has developed specific goals and a five-year program-development process to facilitate their continued success.

Parents will also continue to be involved in the ongoing improvement of student’s educational experience. The district views parents as both a valuable resource and an audience for parenting education and has distinguished itself as a catalyst for parent education within the community with its Books for Babies and Together.... We Grow programs. MPSD expects to continue these programs as it expands parent education initiatives.

The Manitowoc Public School District is working with each school to develop an action research plan that will promote both high academic achievement and a safe and orderly learning environment for all students. Action research is a form of continuous evaluation and data collection that allows flexibility as the district strives to meet specific school needs. This action research plan will build on the data collection begun with the Search Institute survey.

Linked to action research plans, MPSD is also committed to developing curriculum goals and classroom methods that include skills and competencies, critical thinking, and self-reflection. Along with these curriculum goals and methods, the district is developing an integrated checklist of health concepts covered in all subject areas. This checklist will assist staff in their efforts to create a curriculum that integrates health and wellness topics across other subject areas.

Finally, the Manitowoc Public School District will be initiating other efforts to use students as support resources for other students. Staff members appreciate the benefits of existing mentor and peer programs and hope to expand on them to better meet the needs of all students.